

VZCZCXRO3392
OO RUEHFK RUEHKS RUEHNAG RUEHNH
DE RUEHC #6450 1222201
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O P 012155Z MAY 08
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3957
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 0794
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA PRIORITY 0344
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 0935
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 3285
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 0719

UNCLAS STATE 046450

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL CHILD ABDUCTION PRESSED
WITH JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS

11. (SBU) On the margins of the Deputy Secretary's April 9 lunch meeting with Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka, EAP/J raised the international parental child abduction issue with Yasuhiro Kobe, the Director of the Office of the Vice Foreign Minister. EAP/J told Kobe that the Department of State placed the highest priority on the welfare of children who were victims of international parental abduction. The Department was particularly concerned with the Japanese government's unresponsiveness in cases in which American citizen children had been abducted to Japan. Japan's family laws, restrictive privacy laws, and lack of interest in resolving parental abduction cases had sharply limited our efforts to gain consular and parental access to the American citizens children. EAP/J praised Japan for being a signatory to the Hague Conference on Private International Law, and urged Japan to sign the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction as a first step to addressing this issue. EAP/J also explained that the Department had received numerous Congressional and media inquiries on this issue, and that Japan's unresponsiveness was damaging Japan's image.

12. (SBU) Kobe said neither he nor VFM Yabunaka were aware of the issue. Embassy of Japan Management First Secretary Kosei Murota said the Japanese Embassy in Washington and First North American Affairs Division were the only Foreign Ministry offices aware of the issue. Murota said the subject was particularly difficult for the foreign ministry to address because the Ministry of Justice had jurisdiction over these cases. EAP/J reiterated that the Foreign Ministry could begin by signing the Hague Convention.

RICE